



For Release: Wednesday, October 02, 2019

19-1766-PHI

MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE: Philadelphia, Pa.

Technical information: (215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov [www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic](http://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic)

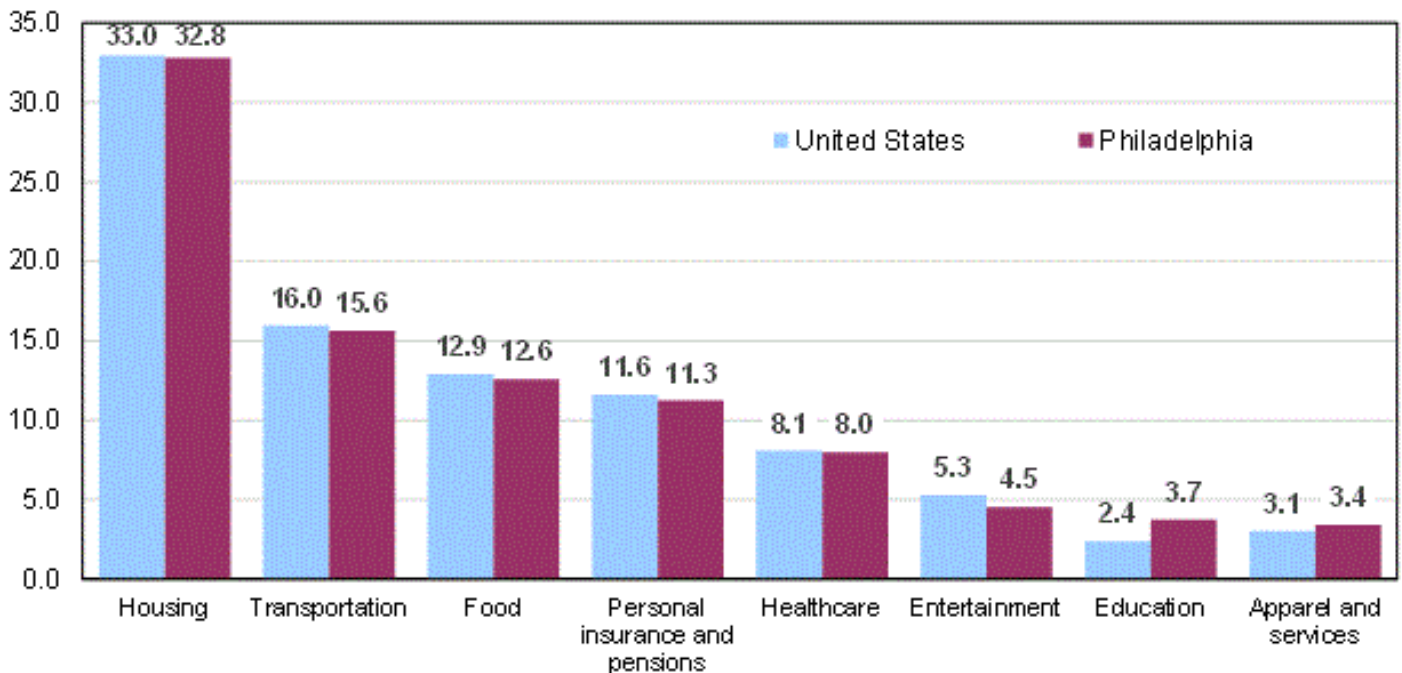
Media contact: (215) 861-5600 BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

## Consumer Expenditures for the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area: 2017-18

Households in the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD, metropolitan area spent an average of \$70,813 per year in 2017–18, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that this figure was significantly higher than the \$60,580 average expenditure level for households in the United States. Philadelphia-area households allocated their dollars similarly to the nation in seven of the eight major categories, with one differing significantly from its respective U.S. average. The share of expenditures for entertainment, which accounted for 4.5 percent of the average household's budget in the Philadelphia area, was significantly lower than the national average of 5.3 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures for eight major categories in the United States and Philadelphia metropolitan area, 2017–18**

Expenditure shares



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Highlights of the Philadelphia area's 2017-18 spending patterns:

- **Housing:** This was the largest expenditure category for Philadelphia-area households and averaged \$23,225. Housing accounted for 32.8 percent of the area's household budget, similar to the 33.0-percent U.S. average. (See [table 1](#).) Housing expenditure shares among the 22 metropolitan areas nationwide for which data were available ranged from 39.4 percent in San Francisco to 30.1 percent in Detroit. (See [table 2](#).)
- **Transportation:** A Philadelphia-area household spent 15.6 percent of its budget on transportation, not significantly different from the national average of 16.0 percent. Of the \$11,065 in annual transportation expenditures in Philadelphia, 89.9 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles; this compared to the national average of 92.1 percent. Among the 22 published metropolitan areas, Philadelphia was 1 of 14 areas to have a transportation expenditure share that was not significantly different than the national average. (See [table 2](#).) The shares for transportation expenditures ranged from 19.3 percent in Detroit to 10.9 percent in Honolulu.
- **Food:** The portion of a Philadelphia household's budget spent on food, 12.6 percent, was not significantly different from the 12.9-percent U.S. average. Philadelphia-area households spent \$5,085, or 57.0 percent, of their food dollars on food at home and \$3,835 (43.0 percent) on food away from home. In comparison, the average U.S. household spent 56.4 percent of its food budget on food at home and 43.6 percent on food away from home.

### Technical Note

Data in this release are from the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE), which the U.S. Census Bureau conducts for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data in this release were averaged over a 2-year period, 2017 and 2018.

A household in the CE survey is defined as a consumer unit which includes families, single persons living alone or sharing a household with others but who are financially independent, or two or more persons living together who share expenses. The terms household or consumer unit are used interchangeably for convenience.

Differences in spending among metropolitan areas may reflect differences in the cost of living, but they also may reflect other causes. Spending differences may result from different consumer preferences or variations in demographic characteristics, such as household size, age, or income levels. However, expenditure shares, or the percentage of a household's budget spent on a particular category, can be used to compare spending patterns across areas. Sample sizes for the metropolitan areas are much smaller than for the nation, so the U.S. estimates and year-to-year changes are more reliable than those for the metropolitan areas. Users should also keep in mind that prices for many goods and services have changed since the survey was conducted.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with our ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. A large difference between two values may not be statistically significant, while a small difference could be significant; both the sample size and the variation among the values in the sample affect the relative error of the estimates.

For additional technical and related information, see <https://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/ce/home.htm>. Data for the nation, the four geographic regions of the U.S., and 22 metropolitan areas nationwide are available at [www.bls.gov/ce/tables.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ce/tables.htm). Metropolitan definitions used in the survey are available at [www.bls.gov/ce/ce\\_msa\\_201516.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ce/ce_msa_201516.htm). The metropolitan area discussed in this release is the Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; New Castle County in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland. Metropolitan area news releases for the Consumer Expenditure Survey are available at <https://www.bls.gov/regions/subjects/consumer-spending.htm>.

**Table 1. Average annual expenditures, characteristics and percent distributions, United States and Philadelphia metropolitan area, 2017-18**

| Category                                   | United States | Philadelphia |
|--|---------------|--------------|
| <b>Consumer unit characteristics:</b>      |               |              |
| Income before taxes.....                   | \$76,118      | \$93,210     |
| Age of reference person.....               | 51.0          | 54.1         |
| <b>Average number in consumer unit:</b>    |               |              |
| People.....                                | 2.5           | 2.4          |
| Children under 18.....                     | 0.6           | 0.5          |
| Adults 65 and older.....                   | 0.4           | 0.5          |
| Earners.....                               | 1.3           | 1.4          |
| Vehicles.....                              | 1.9           | 1.7          |
| Percent homeowner.....                     | 63            | 69           |
| Average annual expenditures.....           | \$60,580      | \$70,813*    |
| <b>Percent distribution</b>                |               |              |
| Total.....                                 | 100.0         | 100.0        |
| Food.....                                  | 12.9          | 12.6         |
| Alcoholic beverages.....                   | 0.9           | 0.8          |
| Housing.....                               | 33.0          | 32.8         |
| Apparel and services.....                  | 3.1           | 3.4          |
| Transportation.....                        | 16.0          | 15.6         |
| Healthcare.....                            | 8.1           | 8            |
| Entertainment.....                         | 5.3           | 4.5*         |
| Personal care products and services.....   | 1.3           | 1.2          |
| Reading.....                               | 0.2           | 0.2          |
| Education.....                             | 2.4           | 3.7          |
| Tobacco products and smoking supplies..... | 0.6           | 0.5          |
| Miscellaneous.....                         | 1.7           | 2.4          |
| Cash contributions.....                    | 3.1           | 2.8          |
| Personal insurance and pensions.....       | 11.6          | 11.3         |

Note: An asterisk (\*) represents a statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence interval.

**Table 2. Percent share of average annual expenditures for housing, transportation, and food, United States and 22 metropolitan areas, 2017-18**

| Area                       | Housing | Transportation | Food  |
|----------------------------|---------|----------------|-------|
| United States .....        | 33.0    | 16.0           | 12.9  |
| Anchorage .....            | 31.5    | 15.7           | 12.6  |
| Atlanta .....              | 32.8    | 16.3           | 11.5* |
| Baltimore .....            | 32.3    | 15.8           | 11.9  |
| Boston .....               | 37.5*   | 12.0*          | 12.1  |
| Chicago .....              | 35.3*   | 13.2*          | 13.3  |
| Dallas-Fort Worth .....    | 36.7*   | 16.8           | 11.1* |
| Denver .....               | 34.2    | 15.2           | 12.4  |
| Detroit .....              | 30.1*   | 19.3*          | 12.3  |
| Honolulu .....             | 38.0*   | 10.9*          | 18.1* |
| Houston .....              | 34.1    | 15.9           | 11.8* |
| Los Angeles .....          | 35.7*   | 13.6*          | 13.2  |
| Miami .....                | 37.3*   | 15.3           | 11.8  |
| Minneapolis-St. Paul ..... | 33.6    | 12.9*          | 11.6* |
| New York .....             | 39.0*   | 12.0*          | 12.3  |
| Philadelphia .....         | 32.8    | 15.6           | 12.6  |
| Phoenix .....              | 31.0    | 19.0           | 11.7  |
| San Diego .....            | 35.9*   | 14.3           | 13.3  |
| San Francisco .....        | 39.4*   | 11.3*          | 12.6  |
| Seattle .....              | 34.5    | 14.1           | 13.4  |
| St. Louis .....            | 32.9    | 15.1           | 11.7  |
| Tampa .....                | 35.5    | 15.3           | 14.3  |
| Washington, D.C. ....      | 33.9    | 14.4           | 12.3  |

Note: An asterisk (\*) represents a statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence interval.